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More recently, however, open systems have become popular particularly with advances in networking and hardware capabilities. Open systems generally make copies on a file-by-file basis where one logical volume is involved. However, they do not have commands with the capability of handling data on a track-by-track basis. In recent times, the need for making single or multiple copies essentially independently of normal processing has become more desirable even in open systems. Moreover, it has become desirable to transfer entire logical volumes, and even to copy a subset, because in open systems logical volume transfers can actually occur more quickly. This feature exists because it is not necessary to incur the overhead of finding data blocks associated with a single file which can be at any arbitrary position in a logical volume.

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Assume the HOST APP A application 22 processes data in the logical device 36A and, as a requesting host application, could then determine a need to transfer a copy of the data in logical device 36A to logical device 40A for use by another application, such as the HOST APP B application 23. Obviously the logical device 40A must have a capacity that is at least the capacity of logical device 36A. A special copy command (e.g., a FILE SMMF command) contains arguments that identify the logical devices 36A and 40A as source and destination

might include determining that the logical device identification is valid and the same address as might be recorded in the device header. Any of a number of other tests may also be performed to verify the context and content of the system call.

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Control then passes to a procedure 127 shown in FIG. 6. If the destination device has mirrored physical devices, a procedure, not described in detail, but known in the art, assures that all the related mirror devices are inactive. In an open system, control transfers to step 131. For each track in the destination device, step 131 performs a number of functions. First, it uses the values in the header 61 to determine that the header 61 is associated with a destination logical device and that an indirect (IND) bit position 132 in each track associated with the destination device is cleared. Then, for every destination track, step 131 sets that IND flag and sets an indirect address, that is the address of the track in the source logical device to be copied, to a cache pointer.

If there are any pending write operations to the device, they are cleared. More specifically, this implementation of the invention assumes that the requesting host application will take no action to destroy data integrity. With this assumption, any write pending operations are irrelevant because they would be replaced by the copied file. Clearing the write pending flag assures that no such data will overwrite the